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ABSTRACT

The author traces the emergence of national and international efforts toward population education, and suggests that the growing acceptance of its need and the problems revealed in the early efforts have set the stage for a more fundamental and critical appraisal of population education. As a means of identifying issues and problems which will face American educators in the expansion of population education activities in this country, the following five elements involved in any curriculum innovation are discussed as they relate to population education: 1) the nature of the learner; 2) the distinctive features of the body of knowledge relevant for the curriculum; 3) the specific outcomes desired from the innovation; 4) the qualities of the instructional staff; and, 5) the constraints posed by the social characteristics of the school system and its program. Each of these is considered briefly in order to suggest an approach which needs to be employed more exhaustively. Several themes appear throughout the presentation: 1) the need to develop an approach specific to population education rather than a piecemeal adaptation of older patterns; 2) the need for research on background factors as a base for curriculum development; and, 3) the simultaneous development of population education in many parts of the world, with the evident need for means for sharing experiences. (Author/JLB)

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POPULATION EDUCATION AS IT EXISTS TODAY

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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The unique position of population education in the history of education and of curriculum innovations is illustrated by this meeting. This is the first national meeting of educator leaders in the United States to consider the status and future of population education as a phase of the American education system. However, this meeting comes almost two years after the first national meeting of educators concerning population education was held in Bombay, India and after other national seminars were held in Chile, Colombia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. It is being held close to two years after international consultations on population education were held by UNESCO and IPPF and nine months after a regional workshop sponsored by UNESCO was held in Bangkok.

Several aspects of this development contribute to the statement that population education seems to have a special place in education history. Within a short period of time, a curriculum innovation has moved to the level of national attention in a number of countries in quite different parts of the world. Although some American educators may have some part in this development, population education is not a curriculum pattern being exported from technologically developed societies to developing countries. Furthermore, this is an educational development which is occurring in many places within the same period of time in spite of the fact that no model for such an innovation exists anywhere.

What is not unique about this development is the timing of curriculum innovations in reference to public interest in social problems. The national

seminar in India came nearly fifteen years after population limitation became a matter of public policy. All of the countries listed above already have public programs or extensive private programs in population planning and many countries with official family planning programs have not yet begun population education activities. Educators have not been the leaders in social change and there are structural reasons for this. Educational systems are public enterprises in which all or large sectors of the population are required to participate. A level of consensus is required for the officially sanctioned activities of this public service that is not required of some governmental activities which reach only sectors of the population and in which participation is voluntary.

In any event, it is clear that the interest in population is closely related to the emergence of concern about rapid growth of population in many parts of the world. The high level of priority being accorded population related activities in the United Nations and other international agencies is a recognition of the shared concern of nations around the world of the significance of population dynamics for the quality of life within each society.

The population picture varies from country to country and the interplay between population and other factors as they affect the quality of life is also different. In those developing countries that are making serious efforts to promote rapid economic and social development, the rate of increase of population and the age structure are such as to hinder the attainment of development goals. In highly industrialized countries, where the rate of population increase is at a lower rate, the significance of this limited growth is magnified by the per capita level of consumption with the associated impact on the natural and social environment.

The economic and political interdependence of nation states adds further dimension to the common concern with population as both a national and an inter-

national problem. The famine in India was met by extensive importation of food. The effects of bi-lateral and multi-lateral aid programs are undercut by rapid increases in population and in some instances a by-product of such aid programs is the acceleration of the growth of population through improvement of health services. The green revolution is largely a product of the initiative of scientists from developed countries working with scientists in developing countries. It is within this context that interest in population education has been growing in countries in various stages of social and economic development.

A sketchy review of population education activities in countries around the world will serve to indicate the variations in the stages of development and will also aid in identifying some of the problems which have arisen, some of which are ones to which American educators will need to give attention. This review will be presented by classifying countries into three categories. In the first category are those countries in which a formal program of population education has been initiated by the Ministry of Education or one of its official organs. In this group are India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Chile and Nepal. The second category is made up of those countries in which initial steps have been taken that involved in some degree units of the central Ministry of Education or some other official unit in the country. Included in this group are South Korea, Taiwan, Tunisia, Colombia, Egypt, and the United States. In the third category are countries in which plans for official activities have been made and activities should begin during 1971. Those which are known to be in this category are Malaysia, Thailand, Iran, and Ceylon. Pakistan and Turkey are not included in any of the categories even though limited activities were instituted in each country several years ago. In addition, countries which have taken steps to introduce sex education programs have not been included. This includes some countries in Central and South America, Sweden and Denmark.

In reviewing the international field, it is important to note the activities and resources of various agencies and organizations which are involved in one way or another with population education. UNESCO as the United Nations organization with primary responsibility for formal education is of particular importance. Two professional staff members have been appointed to give direction to UNESCO's work in its headquarters, and several regional appointments have been authorized, including the UNESCO office for Asia in Bangkok and for Latin America in Santiago. Staff members will be assigned to the regional training centers for educational planning in New Delhi, Beirut, Dakar, and Santiago. A regional workshop for curriculum development in population education has held in Bangkok in September, 1970 and a regional survey of selected South American countries followed by a brief workshop in Santiago took place during the fall of 1970. UNESCO is completing arrangements with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities to provide assistance to countries which need help in establishing population programs.

The Home Economics section of FAO which includes work in schools has begun to lend support to population education and the School Health section of WHO has also become involved. The South Asia regional office of WHO with headquarters in New Delhi has been particularly active. UNICEF has found ways to be helpful in several settings including Taiwan.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation held a work conference in the fall of 1969 to consider its role in school education. Its historic stance has been characterized by major attention to sex education. However, within the past year, increasing attention is being given population education by the secretariat as well as by regional units, particularly in Asia. The national conference of the India Family Planning Association in February 1971 was devoted to population education and one of the plenary sessions at the Southeast Asia and Oceania Region of IPPF held in the Philippines in March, 1971

was given over to the discussion of population education. Resolutions adopted by that conference as well as the closing remarks of the new secretary-general of IPPF, Dr. Julie Henderson attest to the serious interest of this group in population education.

AID has authorized the use of funds in its population programs for work in population education. These funds have been used in several settings for sex education programs rather than population education. Support has also been given by AID to university centers and to some private organizations including funds specifically for population activities.

The Population Council began to support population education work in 1964 and in the fall of 1969 added a professional staff member whose primary responsibility has been the extension of population education activities in the United States and overseas. Under his direction, recent support has been given to activities in Chile, Colombia, Iran, and Tunisia.

The Pathfinder Fund has from time to time supported population education activities in Colombia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and perhaps other countries. The Ford Foundation has not had a formal program in population education but on occasion its field personnel have made significant contributions. Of particular importance in this role have been Dr. Ozzie Simmons in Chile and Harold Howe in India.

In addition to these foundations, several American universities have made contributions to foreign countries through consultation, training, and research. In this category are Harvard, University of Michigan, University of North Carolina, and Teachers College, Columbia University. Cornell and Florida State University have recently begun work in this field.

The listing of work by foundations and universities may suggest a heavier investment of resources than is in fact the case. There are probably not more than five full-time equivalent man years being devoted to population education

in the United States by professional staff members. This number could be augmented by including a number of graduate students giving at least part-time to this field as research assistants or in other capacities. The personnel who have served from time to time in consultative and development capacity on an international basis is limited to about ten persons including the two staff members at UNESCO headquarters. Five of those ten are attending this conference.

A full history of the development of population education activities in schools in this country is beyond the function of this paper. However, a brief outline of some of the events will indicate the short history and the centers of activity.

1962 Article by Philip Hauser in Teachers College Record
1964 Establishment of project at Teachers College
1965 Session at annual meeting of National Council for Social Studies
1965 Distribution of 600 copies of "Teaching Population Dynamics" to social studies leaders
1965 Session at annual meeting of National Association of Geography Teachers
1965 Plenary session at annual meeting of Planned Parenthood/World Population
1967 Program begun at Harvard
1968 National survey of teaching of population and sex education by PP/WP
1968 First phase of program at North Carolina
1969 Program begun at University of Michigan
1969 National Science Foundation Summer Institute in Utah for secondary school teachers
1969 Manressa Workshop for teachers
1970 Introduction of Population Education Act in Congress (Senator Tydings)
1970 Conference of American experts sponsored by The Population Council
1970 Session in National Conference on Optimum Population/Environment
1970 Curriculum project at University of Delaware
1970 Session at annual meeting of National Council of Social Studies
1970 Session at annual meeting of Science Education Teachers
1970 Curriculum project of Institute for Health and Society
1971 Appointment of State Advisory Committee on Population Education, New York State

This incomplete chronology does not include the large number of constructional programs which were developed by teachers in various parts of the country. The extent of this is not known but it is clear from the number of requests for materials received from teachers and the response to the Manressa Workshop that many teachers during this period were teaching units on population.

Members of this conference can perhaps provide some indication of the extent of interest as well as add important items to the chronology given above.

In the discussion above, the short history of population education has been documented. In addition, the development of activities in many parts of the world during the same period of time has been emphasized. It is quite understandable that these two factors would lead to quite different definitions of the nature and scope of the field. Since a number of countries involved had already adopted family planning program as official government efforts, detailed attention to the specific goals and content of school curricula was not a necessary prior step to the consideration of the validity of a population education program.

However, once the policy decision to introduce population education had been reached or at least was being seriously considered, the delineation of the educational problem had to be faced. At this point, the process described by Marshall McLuhan seemed to have frequently occurred. McLuhan has suggested that when a new problem is being faced, the tendency is to look ahead but in so doing to look at the rear mirror rather than at the new landscape. What some educators have seen when they looked for an educational approach to the problem of population were approaches appearing in the rear mirror, such as family life education, sex education, demography, and more recently conservation education.

These curriculum areas are old solutions to old problems in industrialized countries. Interest in family life and sex education grew with the significant shifts in family life and sexual practices which accompanied the development of contemporary western life including the development of the nuclear family, non-family settings for work for both males and females, prolonged home residence of children through school ages, the development of large urban settings with high division of labor, and the shifts from traditional social controls to

contractual relations. As traditional family and community modes of socialization proved inadequate to prepare young people for the new society, educators sought to provide school experiences which would aid young people to face the new social demands. Interest in population was seldom involved, and interest in family planning was either an effort to avoid illegitimacy or to aid young people to manage their sex relations in or out of marriage. The number of children was of no serious concern so long as they were planned.

Similarly, the concern with man's exploitation of his environment, expressed in the conservation education movement, antedates the current appreciation of the significance of population growth. The rapid technological developments and increased rates of consumption have fulfilled the warnings of some of those early leaders who were sensitive to the inexorable linkage of man to his environment. The Environment Education Act gives limited attention to population in keeping with the historic emphasis of conservation education. In this context, it should be noted that a new group has arisen which shares the concern about the natural environment in which men live but who are concerned with growth of population as a threat to the ecosystem.

The fourth image seen in the rear-view mirror is the discipline of demography. Since the central concern is with population, the assumption has been made by some that the educational response should be instruction in the formal content of demography. And since this subject has been largely reserved for selected students in higher education, the task has been seen as essentially one of adapting the university level content to the school level much as chemistry or physics has been adapted. While it is evident that the discipline of demography is a central source of relevant concepts, propositions, and data, this discipline has its own internal logic and structure as do other academic disciplines. An understanding of the meaning of population for the contemporary

world involves many elements which are marginal at best to formal demography.

If population education is not simply an old educational approach to old problems, what then is it? This question must be answered at two levels: What is current and projected practice and what might it be. Current practice is largely characterized by a number of short teaching units built around particular educational goals and concepts without a fully developed framework. This pattern has emerged in keeping with a prior decision not to set up a special course for a particular grade level but to integrate teaching units and concepts into the existing curriculum. The officially established syllabi for various grade levels and for various subject areas have been inspected to locate the points in such a grid where a unit might be introduced. In addition, some new concepts may be introduced in connection with existing units.

This integration approach is a function of several factors. The pressures to include new content areas or to increase the amount of time given to content areas already in the curriculum are great in all countries. Since the time available is esentially a fix element, any new content area introduced means that other established areas will suffer a reduction in time available.

Another factor of particular importance to developing countries is the high drop out rate. If a course is provided at the tenth grade level, this will reach only those who are still in school at that level. To provide a large block of time at each grade level to meet this problem would involve a major time commitment by the school system.

An additional factor is the absence of a coherent body of concepts and organized body of knowledge comparable to those subject areas which are now in the curriculum. At this time in history, such a subject area has not been developed in a comprehensive and detailed fashion. The approach to this problem used by Professor Donald Stegner of the University of Delaware is an effort which merits attention with full awareness of the environmental focus of that

project. The papers of Don Chauls, T. N. Metha, and V. Basnajake prepared for the UNESCO Regional Workshop in Bangkok are useful documents with a clear population focus, but they do not provide an integrated approach.

Implied in the evaluation of past efforts noted above is a conception of the field of population education which needs to be made more explicit. The central phenonomena which is the occasion for the development of population education is the rapid increase in population in the world, particularly since World War II. Rapid declines in the death rate largely through external interventions that have not involved individual actions is the principal demographic factor. At the present state of knowledge no external intervention is possible for effecting reduction in birth rates even if value systems would support such interventions. Growth rates are the cumulative consequence of actions of individual couples. Various action programs by public and private groups designed to influence the reproductive behavior of individual couples is the political response to the problem.

The educational response involves both cognition and values. The cognitive problem is the development of at least a minimum level of understanding of the causes of population developments and the consequence of such developments for the individual, his community, his nation, and his world. The value problem is the provision of experiences which will help the individual to formulate his own attitudes with awareness of the cumulative consequences for the society of his own behavior.

The key element in this approach is the acceptance of the proposition that the population development is a significant new phenomena with which mankind must cope. As such, it warrants the most profound analysis and the use of creative imagination as to the actions which should be undertaken. The educator's approach to the phenomena is assumed to be as difficult and as demanding as any other phase of the social response to this problem.

With this assumption, the premise on which the educator would operate is that a curriculum specific to the problem would be created. He would assume that the end product would not look like the curriculum which has been developed to deal with other intellectual or social issues. The selection and organization of educational objectives, concepts, activities would be specific to the task at hand. These may be drawn from existing bodies of knowledge. However, new formulations may also be necessary and new research may be necessary to build the curriculum of population education.

In the analysis presented above, an effort has been made to trace the emergence of population education on to the world education scene and to suggest that delineation of the scope, content, and structure of this curriculum innovation is reaching a new state in its development. The growing acceptance of the need for population education and the problems revealed in the early efforts at establishing the programs have set the stage for a more fundamental and critical appraisal of population education. American educators are in a position to profit by the experience of their colleagues in other parts of the world.

As a means of identifying issues and problems which will fact American educators as they give consideration to the expansion of population education activities in this country, the following five elements involved in any curriculum innovation will be discussed as they relate to population education. These five are: (1) The nature of the learner; (2) The distinctive features of the body of knowledge relevant for the curriculum; (3) The specific outcomes that are desired from the innovation; (4) The qualities of the instructional staff; and (5) The constraints posed by the social characteristics of the school system and its program. Each of these elements will be considered briefly in order to suggest an approach which needs to be employed more exhaustively.

The Nature of the Learner: Understanding of the student as a developing person is a basic element in any educational venture. In the area of our concern, he brings to the classroom a set of experiences and values that the school must take into account. Unfortunately, we have very little systematic knowledge about students in this area. Some research is now going on designed to determine when children begin to formulate their ideas about the size of families which they want to have. We do not know the determinants of such ideas and to what extent school and peer experience contribute to these ideas. The potentially high affect involved in consideration of reproductive behavior poses a particular need to extend our understanding of the learner.

Given the fact of the attenuated connection between the reproductive behavior of individuals and social welfare, the educator has a special problem in understanding the process by which individuals make such connections in a meaningful fashion. A special aspect of this problem is the determination of the appropriate experiences for the learner at the different stages of his development.

In this curriculum area as in others, the differences in learners related to their social backgrounds become another factor to be taken into account. In the area of population education, the content may need to be adapted for the student in the highly urban areas or from sub-groups in the society with distinctive values and traditions.

Although there is a body of research which can contribute to our understanding of some of these aspects, much work needs to be done. Until such time as this is done, we shall have to rely on inferences from research done with other purposes in mind.

Characteristics of the Relevant Bodies of Knowledge: In another connection, the problem of identifying the appropriate content was discussed above. Without assuming that one can at this stage make that identification in an exhaustive

manner, one can still note some of the problems for population education which are functions of the content. One of the difficulties is that the content will come from several different academic disciplines. The history of integrating content from different disciplines is not a very happy one. Many concepts have their meaning within the context of a particular discipline and there is a real danger of distortion when they are used in other settings.

Related to this issue is the difficulty inherent in using a problem area as a basis for curriculum organization. This difficulty is not solved fully by locating teaching units within established subjects. As has been true of inter-disciplinary work, the history of problem-centered curriculum efforts is not a very encouraging one.

Of even more significance are the serious gaps in relevant knowledge pertaining to population. Some of the debates which are now occurring among scholars in this field are functions of the limited state of our knowledge. This problem is further complicated by the time spans involved. For example, even if serious declines in the birth rates were to occur, the population would continue to increase for a substantial period. If India were to attain a replacement level reproduction rate by 1980 (that is in 10 years) and maintained that level, the age structure is such that she would reach a level of one billion people before stabilizing in about fifty years. We can make such projections with a high degree of confidence since such a projection involves established demographic principles. However, we can not project with equal certainty many other factors which can influence the consequences of such a population growth.

Even though some aspects of population education are made difficult by this time perspective problem, there is enough solid substance for building a curriculum. The process of building the curriculum will help us to locate areas for research which may not otherwise be of interest to scholars.

The Goals of Population Education: A school system has many educational objectives and the formulation of objectives for population education for American students should fit in with these objectives. No effort will be made here to state such objectives in detail. In general there are two types which may be identified. On the one hand, population education should develop an appreciation by the individual of the consequences for his family and his society of his own actions and attitudes. On the other hand, it should help the individual to see how he is affected by population developments that are occurring in his community and in the world. Implicit in these statements is the established fact that man can control his reproduction. He may not choose to do so, and the reasons for choosing to control or not control may also be relevant content.

In the consideration of consequences of population dynamics, the impact on the natural environment is a legitimate part. This is of particular importance in the American scene since the connections between population increase and environmental problems have become a matter of public debate. Surveys of participants in some activist groups which have linked population increase with environmental problems have shown that many have a great innocence about the role of population dynamics. It is important that the school aid in clarifying that relationship including the identification of those aspects where our knowledge base is inadequate.

The generalized goals as stated above include the citizenship role as well. The formulation of population policy as a public matter is also of importance. Informed participation in such a policy area is behavioral aspect of appreciation of the causes and consequences of population developments.

The Characteristics of Instructional Staffs: Curriculum innovations can be institutionalized only if the instructional staff found in American schools can

effectively incorporate the innovation in their work. It is clear from our experience with some innovations that the educational background of teachers, even when they have received speciel instruction for the innovation, has been such as to become an intervening variable in the success of innovations. The PSSC is a case in point. Whether this would be a factor in population remains to be seen but it is clear that this factor should be considered in the development of curricular activities.

Of perhaps more importance is the set of attitudes and values of teachers concerning population matters. Unfortunately, we know very little about the value pattern of teachers in this area. In Pakistan and India where some limited studies have been done, the attitudes expressed were more conservative than others in the society with similar education. The problem is further complicated if integration of content into various subject areas is the pattern which is used. When a special set of teachers is charged with responsibility for a subject area, the selection process and the training can reduce the significance of personal values as an intervening factor. This becomes more difficult as more and more teachers are involved in parts of the program.

School as a Social System: For many reasons, the simplest innovation is one in which a change in content is proposed for a specialized subject located at a particular grade level. Limited impact is felt in other parts of the system and only a few individuals are involved. The more grade levels, the more subjects, and the more persons who are involved, the more difficult it is to effect the innovation. Decisions concerning the pattern of curriculum structure to be used in population should take these system factors into account.

Since the retention rate of students in school is high and becoming higher each year, more options are open to American educations than is true for developing countries. In addition the increased use of modular scheduling and special short units of study opens up possibilities which were not present in the past.

Since there are a number of options, different patterns could be tried. One pattern might involve a combination of the integration and mini-course pattern. A few special units might be developed for use at appropriate points each year and more extended attention might be given at three grade levels such as the 5th, 8th, and 11th.

In any event, the special problems involved in introducing population education into a system in a fashion to maximize the possibility of institutionalization should be taken into account. In the consideration of this aspect of school systems, it is clear that the four other elements discussed above are closely related to each other. All of the five have to be considered together, and in some settings still other factors will need to be included. Support of State Departments of Education will be necessary in some states but not in others.

Conclusion

The relatively high degree of local control of curriculum decisions means that the process of introducing population education in the United States will follow a somewhat different process than will take place in countries with highly centralized systems of education. At the same time, there are relatively few innovations that persist if they do not become generally accepted. For this reason it is important that an effort be made to introduce population education in as many settings as possible.

A theme which has appeared from time to time in this presentation is the need to view population education as a new venture which requires considerable investment of resources in developing an approach that is specific to this area rather than a piecemeal adaption of older patterns. Individual teachers in particular school systems will not wait for a fully developed approach. However, it may be wise to proceed with careful planning rather than to rush into programs.

Another theme has been the identification of the need for research on background factors as a base for curriculum development. It is clear that the development of the program can not wait on the completion of a full research agenda. The Schools of Education in collaboration with their colleagues in the academic specialities can assist the development of this field through such research.

One other theme has been the development of population education in many different parts of the world at about the same point in time with the evident need for means for sharing experiences. Although national programs will of necessity be different in important ways, there are still a number of common issues and problems. In addition, students in the United States will need to be informed about developments outside of this country and, similarly, students in developing countries need to know about the developments in this country. Population education provides a unique opportunity for collaborate work among education colleagues around the world.